

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A method of improving a virtual colonoscopy comprising introducing orally a non-laxative material operable to reduce ~~reducing~~ an attenuation signal of a patient's stool to an attenuation level below an attenuation level of a surrounding colon tissue.

Claims 2-4. (Canceled)

5. (Currently Amended) The method of claim ~~[[4]]~~ 1 wherein the ~~contrast media~~ oral introduction of the non-laxative material results in ~~reduces~~ the patient's stool ~~[[to]]~~ having a density between 80% and 90% that of the surrounding colon tissue.

6. (Currently Amended) The method of claim ~~[[4]]~~ 1 wherein the non-laxative material ~~contrast media~~ is polystyrene hollow beads.

7. (Currently Amended) The method of claim ~~[[4]]~~ 1 wherein the non-laxative material ~~contrast media~~ comprises cellulose.

8. (Currently Amended) The method of claim ~~[[7]]~~ 1 wherein the non-laxative material ~~contrast media~~ comprises a preparation derived from sawdust.

9. (Currently Amended) The method of claim ~~[[2]]~~ 1 wherein the non-laxative material ~~contrast media~~ stimulates gas formation in the patient's stool.

10. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 9 wherein the non-laxative material ~~contrast media~~ comprises gasogens.

11. (Currently Amended) The method of claim [[10]] 9 wherein the non-laxative material ~~contrast media~~ comprises air inside a membrane.
12. (Currently Amended) The method of claim [[11]] 9 wherein the non-laxative material ~~contrast media~~ comprises an air filled closed cell foam.
13. (Currently Amended) The method of claim [[13]] 1 wherein the non-laxative material results in ~~contrast media reduces~~ the patient's stool having [[to]] an attenuation signal between approximately -100 HU and -200 HU.
14. (Currently Amended) The method of claim [[2]] 1 wherein the non-laxative material ~~contrast media~~ makes the patient's stool more heterogeneous.
15. (Currently Amended) The method of claim [[2]] 1 wherein the non-laxative material ~~contrast media~~ increases a [[fat]] lipid content of the patient's stool.
16. (Currently Amended) A method of performing a virtual colonoscopy, the method comprising:
orally administering a non-laxative material ~~contrast media~~ to [[the]] a patient to result in ~~reduce~~ an attenuation signal of a patient's stool that is lower than the attenuation signal of water; and
imaging the patient's colon.
- Claims 17-18. (Canceled)
19. (Currently Amended) The method of claim [[18]] 16 wherein the non-laxative material results in ~~contrast media lowers~~ the density of the patient's stool [[to]] being between approximately 80% and 90% that of surrounding colon tissue of the patient's colon.
20. (Currently Amended) The method of claim [[18]] 16 wherein the non-laxative material ~~contrast media~~ is polystyrene foam beads.

21. (Currently Amended) The method of claim [[18]] 16 wherein the non-laxative material ~~contrast media~~ comprises cellulose.

22. (Currently Amended) The method of claim [[21]] 16 wherein the non-laxative material ~~contrast media~~ comprises a product derived from sawdust.

23. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 16 wherein the non-laxative material ~~contrast media~~ stimulates gas formation in the patient's stool.

24. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 23 wherein the non-laxative material ~~contrast media~~ comprises gasogens.

25. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 24 wherein the non-laxative material ~~contrast media~~ comprises air inside a membrane.

26. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 25 wherein the non-laxative material ~~contrast media~~ comprises an air filled closed cell foam.

27. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 16 wherein the non-laxative material results in ~~contrast media reduces~~ the patient's stool [[to]] having an attenuation signal between approximately -100 HU and -200 HU.

28. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 16 wherein the non-laxative material ~~contrast media~~ makes the patient's stool more heterogeneous.

29. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 16 wherein the non-laxative material ~~contrast media~~ increases a [[fat]] lipid content of the patient's stool.

30. (Currently Amended) A kit for improving a virtual colonoscopy, the kit comprising:

a non-laxative material ~~contrast media~~ that results in ~~reduces~~ an attenuation signal of a patient's stool being lower than the attenuation signal of surrounding colon tissue;

instructions for use comprising orally ingesting the non-laxative material ~~contrast media~~ a predetermined time prior to performing a virtual colonoscopy, wherein the non-laxative material results in contrast media reduces an attenuation signal of the patient's stool that is lower than the attenuation of signal of the surrounding colon tissue; and

a package to hold the non-laxative material ~~contrast media~~ and instructions.

31. (Currently Amended) The kit of claim 30 wherein the non-laxative material ~~contrast media~~ reduces a density of the patient's stool.

32. (Currently Amended) The kit of claim 30 wherein the non-laxative material ~~contrast media~~ increases a [[fat]] lipid content in the patient's stool.

33. (Currently Amended) The kit of claim 30 wherein the non-laxative material ~~contrast media~~ makes the patient's stool more heterogeneous.

34. (Currently Amended) The kit of claim 30 wherein the non-laxative material ~~contrast media~~ stimulates gas formation in the patient' stool.

35. (Currently Amended) A method of performing a virtual colonoscopy on a computer system, the method comprising:

accessing an image scan of a patient's colon that contains stool; and

applying an attenuation threshold that has a lower ~~threshold~~ value than an attenuation signal of the patient's colon and a higher value than an attenuation signal of the patient's stool so as to isolate a patient's stool from the patient's colon.

Claims 36-45. (Canceled)